

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today released the following statement on H.R. 5175, the Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections (DISCLOSE) Act. Despite Mitchell's objection, the bill passed 219-206.

"In January, I was disappointed, and disagreed with, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to roll back campaign finance provisions that have been set in law for over half a century - provisions which have sought to limit the role of large corporate, union and special interest money since the time of Teddy Roosevelt. Not only were these provisions supported overwhelmingly by bipartisan majorities in Congress and by Republican and Democratic Presidents, they had the support of a majority of the American people.

While I support campaign finance reform and its broader goals, I cannot support the DISCLOSE Act as it was written and amended. Ironically, as it wound its way through the House, the bill became an example of the same ugly special interest influence and backroom dealing it seeks to prevent. The House gave into special interests in order to garner enough votes for passage, and as a result, the legislation will not limit the role of all special interests equally. Instead, it creates carve-outs and exemptions for powerful, politically-favored organizations and political advocacy groups, who account for some of the largest expenditures in modern-day political campaigns. If Congress is going to pass meaningful campaign finance reform legislation, it needs to improve the integrity of federal campaigns in a more comprehensive and equitable way. Unfortunately, this does not.

I support real campaign finance reform. As a former government teacher, I believe that we need to reduce the influence of corporations, unions and special interests in elections, and make sure that the American people have a voice, remain engaged and hold candidates and elected officials accountable. American elections should be decided by Americans, and for this to happen, there needs to be transparency and accountability in all campaign spending."

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